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PROPOSED ANNEXATION OF HAWAII.

SPEECH

OF

HON. JOHN C. BELL,
OF COLORADO,

IN THE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,

MONDAY, JUNE 13, 1898.

WASHINGTON.

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Mr. W. A. Smith

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SPEECH
OF
HON. JOHN C. BELL.

The House having under consideration the joint resolution (H. Res. 259) to provide for annexing the Hawaiian Islands to the United States—

Mr. BELL said:

Mr. SPEAKER: It may be that the whirligig of time has brought us around to the point where the very nature of things demands that the American civilization shall leaven the less advanced civilization of its neighboring islands and those of the distant Orient. It may be that the time has come when manifest destiny shall automatically decree that this exemplary Government shall shed its gabardine of justice, impartiality, and equality, and shall join the Old World in gormandizing its national greed by absorbing all of the smaller governments that come within its reach.

If that time is here, it photographs a dismal future for the weak republics of the Western Hemisphere and for the individual poor of our own country.

The new policy would necessarily break down the cardinal landmarks in the Declaration of Independence and make us but a part and parcel of the caste-ridden governments of Europe from which our forefathers fled.

If we join in this crusade and invade the Hawaiian Islands we must break down the most cherished principle of the Declaration of Independence, i. e., "that all governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed."

It is idle to prattle about the present Government being a republic or desiring to be annexed to the United States. It is well known by all who have kept pace with the misfortunes overtaking these islands that the present Government is a pure oligarchy not representing 10 per cent of the people of the island, and representing practically none of the natives. A republic is a government for and by the people. The first law of a republic is to rest

the power in the people. The Dole Government has taken all power from the people, and it is in no sense a government for the people. Suffrage or the elective franchise is only given to the wealthy, which includes but very few, if any, natives. An elector for a senator must have \$3,000 in property above his incumbrances, or must have received a money income of at least \$900 the year preceding the election. The natives have lost practically all of the property of the island.

Mr. LANHAM. What proportion of the real estate of the island is owned by the supposed 3,000 Americans?

Mr. BELL. I have the exact figures right here. The Americans and European whites own 1,053,192 acres; the natives own 257,457 acres.

Mr. MEEKISON. You do not claim that the Americans who went there degenerated as land grabbers?

Mr. BELL. Yes; they succeeded in getting the most of the islands.

The Europeans and Americans pay \$274,516.74 in taxes annually, the natives pay but \$71,386.82, while the Chinese pay \$87,266.10, over fifteen thousand more than the natives.

Mr. LANHAM. Then the Chinese and Japanese and other foreigners already own a great deal of real estate in the islands.

Mr. BELL. Oh, yes. The Japanese and Chinese own a great deal of land and pay a large amount of taxes.

Mr. LANHAM. The gentleman from Nevada [Mr. NEWLANDS] suggested that ultimately those people would withdraw from the islands.

Mr. BELL. The reports show that they do not withdraw at all.

Mr. LANHAM. If they own real estate there, what right would we have to force them to withdraw?

Mr. BELL. None. Bear in mind that three-fourths of the merchants are Chinamen, not contract laborers, and a great many of them are gardeners and farmers and genuine settlers.

Mr. LANHAM. If we should annex Hawaii, we would have to take those Chinese and Japanese with all the rights to real estate that they have. Will the gentleman allow me another question?

Mr. BELL. Yes; certainly.

Mr. LANHAM. Have you any information as to how titles to real estate are derived in Hawaii?

Mr. BELL. I suppose from the Government. They have Government lands there now.

The Senate of the island is given practically a controlling power in the affairs of the island. There are 31,000 natives, 8,000 half-breeds, 24,000 Japanese, 15,000 Chinese, 8,000 Portuguese, 1,000 South Sea Islanders, 3,000 Americans, and 4,000 European whites upon the island, the most of the whites being citizens of other countries. Under the property qualification of voters, out of the 109,000 inhabitants there are only a few legal voters.

The best of evidence has been secured by a personal canvass of the natives and of the non-American population, and it has been found that at least 90 per cent of the population are praying for an independent government. Everyone who has investigated impartially must conclude that the present Government is a usurping oligarchy installed under the overawing influence of the marines of the American war ships, and that it has no power whatever by the consent of the governed. The governors of the Hawaiian Islands are simply old missionaries and their sons and their grandsons and their great-grandsons. And what do they do? Why, sir, my friend from Illinois, the chairman of this committee, talks about "the bold assertion of American manhood there." I am proud of American manhood. We are the greatest people on the face of the earth. But there is nothing about American manhood in Hawaii or English manhood in Hawaii commendable in their dealings with the natives.

Mr. TAWNEY rose.

Mr. BELL. The gentleman must excuse me. I can not yield now; I have not the time.

Mr. TAWNEY. I simply wanted to correct a misstatement of facts.

THE MONROE DOCTRINE.

Mr. BELL. We should not be swept off our feet by the great victory recently won at Manila or succeeding victories that may crown the efforts of our ships and soldiers in the war with Spain. We should not for a moment lose sight of the fundamental principles underlying our form of government and the beneficent results that they have produced during the last century.

Recently, when England threatened to encroach on the territorial limitations of Venezuela, we arose in our indignation and

declared that "America is for Americans." This carries with it the inevitable corollary that Europe is for Europeans and the Orient for Orientals. We promptly made a large appropriation, and proclaimed to the world that we were ready to pledge our blood and our treasure to the maintenance of the Monroe doctrine; that is, that no foreign government should oppress any of the weak powers on this continent or in the adjacent islands. England admitted the validity of our claim and our right to pursue this protecting policy. Should we attempt to hold these islands or the Philippine archipelago or any other foreign islands, except as a security for a war indemnity, such an act would operate ipso facto as a renunciation of our further intention to maintain the Monroe doctrine, and the act would proclaim to the world that we had joined the horde of European greed in attempting to absorb as many of the weaker powers of earth as possible.

It may be said that the Hawaiian Islands more nearly reach our shores than they do those of any other continent, and that such annexation would not militate against the Monroe doctrine. This may be true, strictly speaking, but it does directly conflict with the great principles underlying our former governmental policy. We have advertised to the world, by act and by deed, as well as by proclamation, that we stand as the friend and protector of all weak powers on this continent, including its neighboring islands. We have boasted of the grand example we have set to the world, permitting all other countries to be governed as the people should desire. If we take these islands, we must do so in spite of the protest of 90 per cent of the people, and in a spirit which evinces a change of our colonial policy, and it will be a beacon light to lead us on to other acquisitions, until we become a part of the great governing powers of the world in aggression for territory and spoils. When that day comes we will represent no distinct type of civilization, but will be a part of the mass of the European powers, losing all that we have gained for good government and a higher civilization through a century of matchless progress.

THE POLITICAL FATALITIES OF ANNEXATION.

The cardinal doctrine of this Government is that every adult male citizen above the age of 21 years shall have an equal right at

the ballot box in choosing officers and in shaping the policy of the Government. If we annex Hawaii, we must treat all of the citizens thereof as political equals and give them the privilege of the ballot, or must make another radical change in the policy of our Government.

There are on the islands, according to the last census, 3,086 Americans, of which 1,975 are males; probably 1,000 of these are above the age of 21 years, and therefore legal voters. There are 40,000 Hawaiians and mixed bloods, and probably 8,000 of these are over the age of 21 years; 24,000 Japanese, mostly all males, and probably 16,000 of them above the age of 21 years; 15,000 Chinese; 8,000 Portuguese, and probably 4,000 males above the age of 21 years; 1,000 South Sea Islanders, and probably 300 males above the age of 21 years; 4,161 white people other than Americans, and probably 1,500 males above the age of 21 years.

If we pursue our policy, we must allow the male population of the islands above that age the privilege of voting. If left to a vote of the people of Hawaii, after annexation, the Americans will have no voice whatever in the government of the island, except that of an infinitesimal minority.

While the people of Hawaii have maintained the most intimate trade relations with us and a most trusted friendship, because they regarded this Government as the friend and protectorate of all the weak governments of the continent and adjacent islands, when it comes to taking the independent Government from the island and merging it into our Government every thought and sympathy of the great majority of the legal voters will be entirely anti-American in governmental policy. It will require a government by the bayonet rather than the ballot to make this heterogeneous people harmonize with our institutions.

OUR IMPREGNABLE POSITION.

The great statesmen of the world have conceded our impregnable position by reason of the solidarity of our territory. We are regarded as the greatest land power ever known to the world. The very fact that we are unassailable at home and have no outside points requiring a great navy has been the envy of all great nations. England has long been mistress of the sea. Her possessions dot every country in the world and are largely composed

of small islands. These require her to keep up the greatest navy of the world. While she kept the greatest navy she could control her possessions, but recently she has been weary between two of the greatest powers of earth, Russia and the United States. She has been secure as long as these powers did not aspire to the equipment of a great navy. She saw clearly that the moment a reasonably large navy was added to one of these great land forces, without colonies, her prestige on the seas would fade away.

A few years ago Russia began filling her war chests with gold and building a powerful navy. This at once menaced the supremacy of the English sea power. The recent occupation of the neighboring harbor of Port Arthur, in China, in defiance of the protests of England, demonstrated that the zenith of her supremacy had passed. The combination in Europe seems against her, and now an exposition of the innate weakness of these possessions distributed among all lands and climes is made manifest.

The foreign possessions of Germany have been a curse to the Empire. The foreign possessions of France have been a source of annoyance. The foreign possessions of Great Britain have only been valuable because of her great sea power and facilities for carrying on the commerce between her possessions and the mother country. The colonial possessions of Spain are now destroying the mother country itself. It is openly admitted by Sagasta and others that the colonial possessions have been a curse to the Government, the only benefit being that they have furnished a select few an opportunity to plunder these colonies, as colonial officers. The same thing will occur with us should we adopt a colonial policy. It will be a curse to the great mass of the people, but it will be a blessing to those Americans holding large possessions in the islands and to a certain favorite line of politicians who will become rulers over the unfortunate natives whose possessions we covet.

There is eternal wisdom in the advice of Washington—i. e., “The great rule of conduct for us in regard to foreign nations is in extending our commercial relations, and that we have as little political connection as possible.” And Jefferson added to it the maxim, “Peace, commerce, and honest friendship with all nations, entangling alliances with none.”

We are now reaching the very zenith of commercial glory. This year our exports will exceed our imports by something like \$500,000,000 and we will handle a product aggregating from eight to ten billions of dollars. We are daily going to the front in iron, steel, machinery, breadstuffs, the precious metals, and everything that tends to make a country truly great. We are now passing all nations in all great staples. We have everything under the sun to enable a great people to remain great. We have everything in the way of climate outside of the Tropics, and this we do not need or want. Our people are a product of a temperate climate, and we can not move them beyond the latitude of 55° or within 30° of the equator and maintain the high caste that pervades our homogeneous population.

Now, a minute ago, my friend, Mr. PERKINS, of Iowa, asked a very pertinent question of the gentleman from Nevada [Mr. NEWLANDS], "Will the American people thrive and will our form of government thrive on that island?" My usually positive friend vacillated a little about it. But I say there is not a case in history where this civilization has thrived under a tropical sun. The American civilization, the European civilization, is an incarnation of the temperate climate. It can not exist anywhere else. The African in Africa has lived through the centuries, but that torrid sun has never allowed the front brain to develop. He might live there until doomsday and he never could invent an alphabet, he never could invent a multiplication table, he never could invent an arithmetic, and he never could adopt a republican form of government. The scientists have told us that from the dawn of civilization there has been a government suitable for every clime. Take the extreme north; the government that has always controlled best is force. Take the temperate climate, where the front brain develops, and they tell us that reason is the controlling force there; but take the case of those within 30 degrees of the equator, and nothing else has ever governed them so well as superstition.

I admit that in Hawaii, on account of topographical reasons, you can get every climate that is known to mankind. You can ascend the mountains there until you reach a point where it frosts in July. But when you come down to tilling the soil, when you

come down to where the banana grows, when you come down to the sugar-cane fields, if you put the white man there it will take two or three generations before you get one that will stand the climate. And when you get that type you will get a type but little better than the native himself.

Furthermore, I want to say that the entire cultivation of Hawaii to-day is by Asiatic labor. You may speculate about the American people Americanizing Cuba, Americanizing Puerto Rico, Americanizing the Philippine Islands, but it is a mere dream. It never can be. And I hope to God the day will never come when we shall have a single foot of tropical climate within the bounds of this exemplary Government.

Starting from the seacoast, you may go to an elevation of 500 feet or 1,000 feet or 1,500 feet; and in this way the topography of the country may overcome the geography of the country. When you do that, you can have any climate you want. But in going to these elevated spots you go away from the cane fields, away from the coffee fields, away from the banana fields; you go away from the place where the work is done.

If you annex Hawaii, I expect to see you hold the Philippines. I expect to see you hold Puerto Rico, and you will find that they will never be Americanized. You know the torrid sun of Australia has made the Australian a savage.

Mr. SULZER. Oh, no.

Mr. BELL. History shows it. The equatorial Australian is to-day a savage. The world knows it.

Mr. SLAYDEN. Semibarbaric.

Mr. SULZER. They would not admit that down there.

Mr. BELL. No, they might not, because they do not know it. My friend from Illinois the other day made light of the fact that leprosy prevails in those islands. He said it was a very common sort of leprosy that did not amount to anything. But in a report of the Congregational Church, which has 18,000 members in Hawaii, it is shown that leprosy is so bad that the afflicted ones are isolated on an island and the Congregational missionaries were afraid to visit them.

Mr. BERRY. On a promontory which was devoted to them.

Mr. BELL. I say that when you take the islands of Hawaii,

you take from the people their government without the consent of the governed. This is a parallel to the Fiji Islanders that our friend the gentleman from Missouri [Mr. CLARK] feared to annex the other day. I beg to say to him that the Speaker of this House will never have to fear being swallowed by a Fiji Island representative. The Fiji Islanders have been made slaves to the English Crown. The Fiji islander, when he was invaded by the whites, had a king who never knew of such a thing as a salary. He did not know of such a thing as public corruption. He did not know of such a thing as a combination of property. The inhabitants had enough to eat and enough to wear in their crude way. But by and by when the white man got there, he got this same infernal scheme of getting all their best land. Then he got a bank established and a contract that he was to let the government have so much money. He then got the idea into the king that he ought to have a princely salary. By and by they could not pay their bills and were incarcerated in jail; and by and by they fell at the feet of the Queen of England and said, "For heaven's sake, take the Government, if you will take us out of jail and keep us out of jail." The Queen did it, and said, "Hereafter you may pay your debts in the products of the soil and not in money," and the Fiji Islanders are existing in that condition to-day.

Now, my friends, I want to say to you that the first point I attempt to make is this, that we are taking the country of these natives not because of a necessity, not because of the fact that they have begged us to take them and protect them. These protectors are a few rich men of our blood, of English and German blood. Our friend, Mr. HITT, of Illinois, I think made a great mistake Saturday when he gloated over the fact that in the constitution of 1887 the manhood of America was shown by the way they took hold of the throats of the natives and made them recognize Americans.

I think that was one of the most disgraceful things that an American was ever accused of doing. Let us see what they did. There was a conspiracy of twenty, who took an oath that any five of them at any time who might be chosen would assassinate the King of Hawaii. That is not in keeping with the American spirit. That is not in keeping with the American doctrine. Then they

submitted a constitution to the King of Hawaii and forced it upon him, saying that every man on this island shall be permitted to vote, even the foreigners, without interfering with his citizenship in his home government. Is that much like the American spirit? Who ever heard of such a citizenship being put on a people before? American citizens voting in Hawaii and coming home and voting in the United States! Germans voting in Hawaii and going to Germany and voting again! And that is the constitution that was forced upon that Government. I say that that is in conflict with every principle of the Declaration of Independence.

ANNEXATION MAKES AN INVULNERABLE COUNTRY MOST VULNERABLE.

One of my chief objections to annexation is that it will weaken this Government and make an invulnerable country to any European or Asiatic foe a most vulnerable one. I am aware that some men high in Army and Navy ranks contend that the possession of these islands would add strength rather than weakness to our nation. However, such an argument is so inherently weak and illogical that it carries within itself the elements of its own refutation. The islands are 2,083 miles from our shores—almost midway between our western border line and the Orient—isolated and exposed to attack at all times, with no opportunity of receiving aid until a sea voyage of 2,083 miles is made.

It is contended with some plausibility that this is necessary as a coaling station and with it the North Pacific can be completely controlled. It is argued that since the great steam war ship has displaced the sailing vessel success in war now depends principally upon access to coal, and yet these islands have no coal. There is no United States coal probably nearer than 3,000 miles. If you pile up mountains of coal during times of peace from the territory of some of the friendly powers, that will simply make the island a more inviting object of attack should we become involved in a foreign war. In my opinion, before we finish the present Spanish conflict, we will learn that the coal collier floating about upon the sea will be the supply point for all the vessels in mid ocean. We shall find that friendly nations of one power or another will have their great coal ships floating ostensibly to neutral ports, but they will be picked up by the enemy, and her vessels supplied, and the significance of your island harbors as coaling stations will largely fade away.

Should we own Hawaii it would be a constant menace to our great continental tranquillity. The moment a misunderstanding should arise between us and a foreign power a menace would be made not on the Pacific or Atlantic coasts, where the body of our people and our great powers of defense could be reached in a few hours, but it would be made at this vulnerable point, in mid ocean, some six or seven days' sail from our nearest home port. Not only this, but it takes seven or eight weeks to move our ships from the eastern part of the United States to our western coast. We could not depend upon the support of our naval vessels on the Atlantic, and we would be reduced to the dire necessity of not only fortifying the island against attack, but we would have to have a great Pacific navy kept up at all times. We would be compelled to keep, as it were, a great navy for the western coast of the United States. As the present ships are constructed, there is no material danger from an enemy in possession of these islands. By the time they passed from the islands to our Pacific shores the coal of war ships would be practically exhausted and they would have to rely upon the floating coal colliers.

THE LABOR PROBLEM.

A most unfortunate concomitant of such annexation will be the labor problem involved. A few wealthy Americans and European whites will own all of the valuable possessions of these islands. They will inevitably employ the natives or the poorly paid labor of like climates, and will produce untold quantities of the necessities of life, and will pour them into our channels of trade in competition with our laboring classes without the payment of tariff, to the dire ruin of competing enterprises in this country. Our transportation has now reached an efficiency whereby carrying rates are insignificant, or would be, from these islands to our shores, and would be much less than from the interior of our own country to the market places by railroad.

Again, we have for a century been an example to the world, and are entitled to the credit of the great strides made toward a higher civilization during the hundred years. We are really a composite nation, inviting the citizens of every country, with the exception of China, to join with us in developing this higher civilization. We have, through the influence of our surroundings, and

of an unexampled temperate climate, progressed as no other country in history has progressed.

Education has become universal within our limits, pervading every class of society. We have untold areas undeveloped and awaiting an energetic and thrifty population and the necessary means for the development. In our partially developed state we produce one-third of the wealth of the world. In the great staples we are now becoming the greatest export nation in the world. Could we confine ourselves to our own territory during the twentieth century as we have during the nineteenth century we would have a population of probably 200,000,000 of the most intelligent and happy people on the face of the globe.

When we change our policy to the acquisition of foreign territory vulnerable to attack at all times, necessarily inhabited by an inferior and unambitious race of people, we take upon ourselves not only the responsibility of protecting them from foreign foes, but from domestic insurrection. We take upon ourselves the obligation of ruling and controlling a population environed with climatic conditions that will never permit them to approach an equality or a fitness to assimilate with our race. We invite a constant irritant into the heretofore pacific and harmonious condition of our national life. We will unconsciously and certainly pass from our present commendable dominating spirit of civic life to the dominating spirit of militarism that must of necessity dominate every country that is upheld by a great army and navy.

MILITARISM.

The founders of our Government feared the aggressions of the military power against the civil more than any other supposed enemy of our institutions.

A martial spirit is innate in man, and in a country like ours, where our soldiers and sailors are matchless and the people are very proud of their skill and courage, this danger becomes inordinate.

The soldier is proverbially reckless and unreliable in business affairs, has no appreciation of the value of money nor any dread of extravagant debt or taxation.

The soldier is ever endeavoring to build up and enlarge the Army and Navy, and to obtain opportunities to display his skill in

warfare; therefore it is to be expected that every sailor and every soldier will bend every energy for the annexation of Hawaii or other points which may furnish him opportunity for employment or distinction.

Every owner of a shipyard, coal company, supply company handling war munitions will favor annexation.

Every politician who has an ambition to occupy official position in the islands will be for annexation.

THE GREATNESS OF THE COUNTRY.

I shall not for one moment contend that if we annex these islands, the Philippines, or all the West Indies, this country will not thrive. The country and its institutions would continue to be augmented, but the individual citizen and his opportunities would decay.

Every year we draw nearer and nearer to the caste system of the Old World. No man can look over the military appointments recently made because of the social, political, or financial standing of young men, many of whom were wholly without qualification or experience, without being convinced that an invidious distinction has been made against the efficient trained soldier from the ordinary ranks of society. In fact, it is common talk even among the lads and lasses of the country that applicants for office in the Army or Navy must now present their pedigrees, strains of blood, or social standing rather than their qualifications for the duties of the office. Astonishment is expressed by all classes of society at the boldness with which the President tramples upon the sacred teachings of the equality of our citizens.

Ex-Senator Ingalls, a famous Republican, in a recent letter to the Globe, says:

Our boast has been that we have abolished the artificial distinction of birth and rank and made merit rather than pedigree the criterion of preferment. * * * We must have been wrong, for in the last month we have seen the health, well being, comfort, and fighting capacity of 100,000 men; their food, clothing, shoes, tents, medicine, arms, ammunition, equipage, and pay, involving the expenditure of hundreds of millions of dollars and the protection of the Government against corrupt and incompetent contractors intrusted to youthful and inexperienced civilians for no apparent reason except the shameless importunity of influential kinsfolk and greedy politicians with a pull.

Grant's son and his grandson, Logan's son, Blaine's son, Harrison's son, Alger's son, GRAY'S son, McMILLAN'S son, MURPHY'S son, MITCHELL'S son, Brice's two sons, HULL'S son, Lee's son, Strong's son, SEWELL'S son, Astor's



son, ALLISON'S nephew, and scores of less conspicuous heroes, illustrate the development of political atavism or intermittent heredity, which is one of the most extraordinary features of the past thirty years.

This and the last Administration have evinced clearly the approaching season of caste. Democracy and great wealth have never thrived in the same field. In proportion as an individual grows wealthy his democracy decays. The individual represents the Government in miniature.

It is my judgment that this war is the blighting season of democracy in the United States. Every indication is that the United States will unfold itself in the early morning of the twentieth century into the greatest military and naval power and into the most regal and resplendant aristocracy that the world ever beheld. The mentally dwarfed inhabitants of the Tropics will be the servants again of those in the temperate climates. The ownership will not be so complete nor the responsibility so great as formerly, but the servitude will be more profitable. The people are to blame. They have persistently kept men in power who trampled on every principle underlying a republican form of government.

I shall deprecate the fulfillment of this unwelcome prophecy. I shall deprecate the return of slavery in this country, but with the annexation of the tropical islands this menial labor will certainly be completely controlled and used by their more fortunate brethren there and here. [Applause.]

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